

Summary

The I-5, Rush Road to 13th Street Project

is part of the program to improve the older, 4-lane stretches of Interstate 5 in southwest Washington. The program was first proposed and discussed by Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) in the I-5 Toutle Park Road to Maytown Environmental Impact Statement (final EIS published in September 2003 by the Federal Highway Administration and WSDOT). The project was funded in part by the 2003 Legislative Transportation Funding Package ("nickel projects") passed by the Washington State Legislature.

Where is the I-5, Rush Road to 13th Street project located?

The project is located in Lewis County, Washington, between the cities of Napavine and Chehalis, a total of 3.7 miles (Exhibit S-1). It touches the northern Napavine city limits and the southern Chehalis city limits.

What is the I-5, Rush Road to 13th Street project?

The project involves widening I-5 between the Rush Road and 13th Street interchanges from 4 lanes to 6 lanes and building a new interchange at the existing LaBree Road undercrossing. LaBree Road currently crosses over I-5 on a bridge with no freeway access. The limits of the construction activity on I-5 for the I-5, Rush Road to 13th Street Project are the northern on- and offramps of the Rush Road interchange to the south, and the southern on- and offramps of the 13th Street interchange to the north.

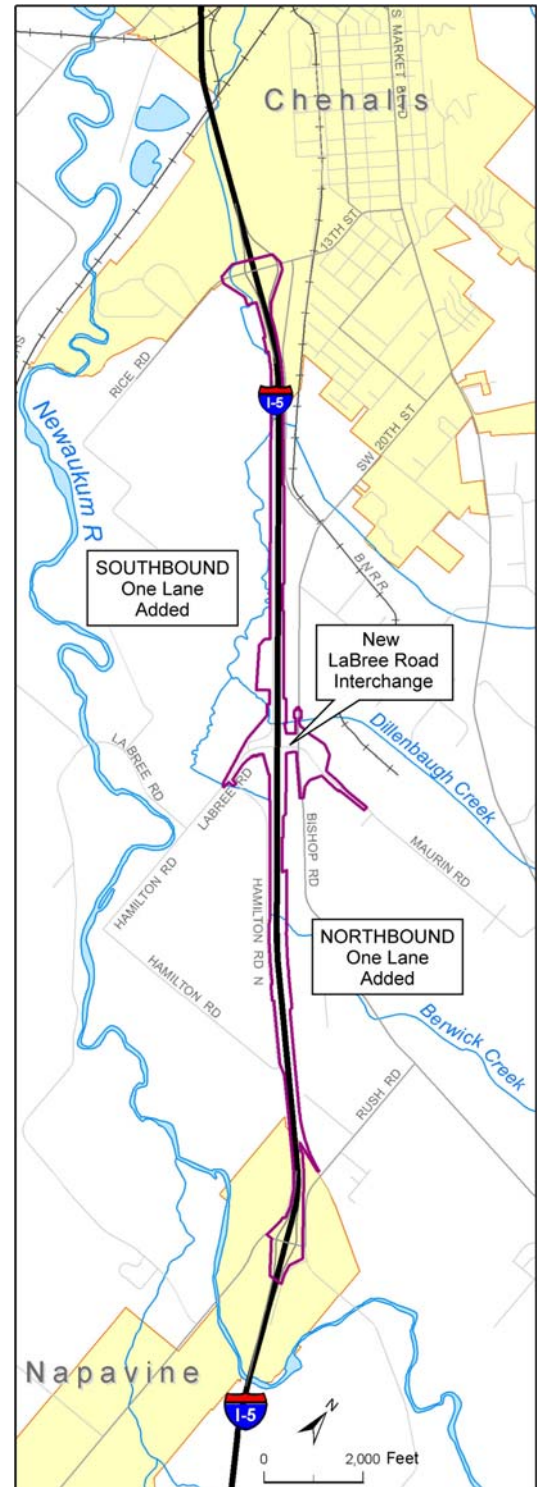


Exhibit S-1. Project Overview

Why do we need this project?

The purpose of the I-5, Rush Road to 13th Street Project is to:

- Provide acceptable levels of traffic operation and improve transportation safety by accommodating 2030 travel demand on the I-5 mainline between the Rush Road and 13th Street interchanges.
- Improve freight mobility by providing more direct, less circuitous access from the I-5 mainline to the Chehalis Industrial Park.

Improving mobility to the Chehalis Industrial Park supports the economic development plans to improve economic diversity and sustainability in Lewis County.

When would construction begin and how long would it take?

Right-of-way acquisition could start as early as 2005 and construction in 2007. The project is scheduled to be complete and open to the public in 2009.

How would the project affect the built environment?

Based on the analysis conducted for this project, there would be no substantial effects on the built environment (elements of the built environment are analyzed in chapters 3 and 4). The following discussion highlights findings of the analysis.

Air Quality - Implementation of the Build Alternative would generally improve air quality, and would lower CO concentration at 3 of the 4 intersections evaluated. Net project effects related to air quality would be positive.

Noise - The Build Alternative would result in minor noise increases at sensitive receiver locations closest to I-5 of 1 to 3 A-weighted decibels (dBA) over existing conditions. This small change in ambient noise levels would not be perceptible to most humans. Nevertheless, peak-hour noise levels at all first-row receiver locations and at some homes located east of Bishop Road would approach or exceed the FHWA Noise Abatement Criteria (NAC). Ambient noise levels at these receivers are currently close to or above the NAC.

Hazardous Materials - Under the Build Alternative, the potential exists for release of hazardous materials associated with the Hamilton/LaBree Road Superfund site during site excavation work near the proposed LaBree Road interchange. The Build Alternative would reduce the potential for hazardous material spills from transport trucks with decreased truck traffic on local roads.

Historical, Cultural, and Archeological Resources - The Build Alternative would have no effects on historic, cultural, or archaeological resources.

Land Use - The Build Alternative is compatible with existing land use, and consistent with future land use plans.

Farmlands - Right-of-way for the Build Alternative would acquire and convert approximately 20 acres of prime farmland. This land is not currently being used for agricultural purposes.

Social - The Build Alternative would have a generally positive effect on social elements through increased safety and additional employment and tax base.

Relocation - The land acquisitions required for the Build Alternative right-of-way would displace one residence. WSDOT follows relocation procedures that ensure fair and equitable treatment of the property owners.

Economics - The Build Alternative would have a generally positive effect on the local economy by attracting new businesses.

Public Services and Utilities - The Build Alternative would have a generally positive effect on public services by improving mobility and emergency vehicle response times.

Recreation - The Build Alternative would have no effects on recreation resources.

Energy - The Build Alternative would consume slightly less energy than the No Action Alternative.

Visual Quality - The widening component of the Build Alternative would have a very limited effect on visual quality as the new lanes would not substantially change the elements of the views. In the vicinity of the proposed LaBree Road interchange, a more noticeable decline in the visual quality of the views to the road would occur with the new interchange bridge structure. The negative visual quality effects resulting from this project would be minor. These effects would be further reduced in the final design by WSDOT following the guidelines in the WSDOT Roadside Classification Plan.

Transportation - The Build Alternative would improve traffic operations to and from the Chehalis Industrial Park, on I-5, and generally within the study area.

Environmental Justice – The project would not result in disproportionately high and adverse effects on minority and/or low-income populations.

How would the project affect the natural environment?

There would be no substantial effects on the natural environment (elements of the natural environment are analyzed in chapters 3 and 4). The following discussion highlights findings of the analysis.

Surface Water/Water Quality - The Build Alternative would increase impervious surface area by 11.7 acres, thereby increasing peak storm flows during storm events. However, new stormwater control and treatment measures implemented as part of the project would improve stormwater handling over the existing condition.

Groundwater - The Build Alternative would increase impervious surface area by 11.7 acres, slightly reducing the aquifer recharge area. This reduction would have a negligible effect on groundwater.

Floodplains - The Build Alternative would slightly reduce flood storage volume relative to the overall volume of the floodplain.

Wetlands - The Build Alternative would fill 8.7 acres of wetland. Lost or impaired wetland functions would be replaced by mitigation efforts completed at the North Fork Newaukum Mitigation Bank.

Vegetation - The Build Alternative would remove a total of approximately 70.7 acres of vegetation. Of this acreage, over 92 percent consists of agricultural, residential, maintained ditch, and meadow/grassland plant communities. All of these community types are the product of cumulative long-term disturbance and contain mostly non-native pasture and turf grasses along with ornamental vegetation. Since this vegetation is currently disturbed, fragmented, and poorly suited for wildlife habitat, these vegetation effects would be minor.

Fish and Aquatic Habitat - The Build Alternative would increase impervious surface area by 11.7 acres, thereby increasing peak storm flows during storm events. However, new stormwater control and treatment measures implemented as part of the project would improve stormwater handling over the existing condition. The project would involve in-water work with impacts to 1,360 square feet of aquatic habitat. The Build Alternative would also enhance fish passage in Berwick Creek.

Wildlife - Under the Build Alternative, effects on wildlife would be minor. The increased roadway capacity would result in additional wildlife mortality from vehicle collisions. This effect is not expected to cause a substantial decrease in wildlife populations.

Geology and Soils - The Build Alternative would have minimal effects on geology and soils. Earth-moving activities during construction would lead to temporary increases in erosion and sedimentation. The completed project would also cause minor topographic changes resulting from elements of the project design such as roadway sideslopes and berms adjacent to the proposed stormwater ponds. Seismic and other geologic hazards would be taken into account in the project design to minimize the effect of these hazards on the project elements.